

NEW NAME FOR SWISS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL ENTITY

Sandor Galambos

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Summary: Swisscontrol, which runs the Swiss civilian air traffic control system under the supervision of federal authorities, has since January 1, 2001, assumed a new name - "Skyguide." At the same time, the consolidation of civil and military navigation services, launched under the "Helco" or "Helvetic Control" program, is gradually being implemented. The implementation process is slated to be completed in 2002, and serves the purpose of handling air navigation services from one singular body. An overabundance of delays and air traffic gridlock encountered particularly during peak season at Switzerland's two principal international airports in 1999 and 2000 engendered a cacophony of calls for reform. They are being met by amalgamating civil and military air navigation services. "Skyguide", which is headquartered in Geneva, is a quasi-governmental entity in which the Federal Government holds the majority of equity stakes (99 percent). End Summary.

The Federal Council mandated Swisscontrol to amalgamate military and civil flying activities into a single body at the Zurich International Airport, making the enlargement of air navigation services necessary. The Board of Directors seized the opportunity to also re-name Swisscontrol. Consequently, some minor adjustments have been made within the organization in the wake of the recent reorganization efforts. The "Technics" departments of the various sites, for instance, were separated from the respective operations at the various airports and have been placed upon an independent footing within "Skyguide". Likewise, Mr. Martin Luethi, who has attained a lot of expertise and knowledge over the past ten years as the head of operations at the Zurich Airport (Tower/Approach), was appointed to be at the helm of the Zurich air navigation services.

Mr. Luethi places paramount emphasis upon optimally handling civil and military air traffic and to accelerate air traffic control efficiency. He maintained in a recent interview that a possible readjustment of the airways/air space in the greater Zurich area would bear great potential to raise capacity and to combat chronic flight delays and cancellations. Technical and operational requirements would be in place to increase volume.

Likewise, Europe-wide there are tremendous efforts underway to ease clogged routes and congestion. Eurocontrol, the Brussels-based European umbrella organization for air traffic control, is very active in bringing relief to the congestion. The European Commission is pursuing efforts to usher in more streamlined and harmonized approaches to managing commercial flights in the airspace of the 15-member European Union and neighboring countries. These efforts are challenged, however, by national boundaries and standards, which pose as difficult, though feasible, hurdles to overcome.

This report was generated by:

Zurich America Center
Mr. Sandor Galambos
U.S. Commercial Service
Dufourstrasse 101
8008 Zurich, Switzerland
Tel: (+41-1)422-2372
Fax: (+41-1)382-2655
E-mail: Sandor.Galambos@mail.doc.gov
Website: www.uscom.ch

IMI Customer Satisfaction Survey

U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
The Commercial Service

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☐ \$501K-\$999K
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